

## NGARRABUL AND OTHER ABORIGINAL TRIBES.

## PART II.—DISTRIBUTION OF THE TRIBES.

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(Plate xxi.)

Following is an account of the distribution of the indigenous tribes in the north-east of New South Wales and south of Queensland, as furnished by my native informants, in accordance with the languages spoken. As Ridley\* observes, the language of a tribe is often named after the expression of negation "No," occasionally after that of affirmation "Yes." Thus "no" in *Kogai* is *ko*; in *Wailhun*, *wail*; in *Wolaroi*, *wol*. On the other hand, "yes" in *Pikumbul* is *pika*. My informant told me that "no" in *Kamilroi* is *kamil*; in *Koomilroi*, *koomil*; and in *Yookumbul*, *yookah*. Strangely enough, "no" in *Pikumbul* is *yūga* (Ridley), in *Turrubul* (Brisbane River) it is *yugār* or *wūkka*, and on the north-west coast *gar*. In *Yookumbul* "yes" is *yo*, and "truly" is *toroogah*. Ridley also gives *yoai* as "yes" in *Dippil* (north of Moreton Bay, Queensland) and *Turrubul*. In *Kamilaroi*, *yo* is "yes," and *gir* "verily." In *Bundel* "no" is *ukūmbi*, and in *Koombainga*, *bi-ō-i*.

To pass on to the individual languages or dialects:—

1. *Güttahn* is spoken at Port Stephens. W. J. Enright† gives *Kut'hung* as the tribe occupying the south of Port Stephens, and mentions at least seven other tribes in the vicinity. In *Ngarrabul*, however, they were collectively designated *Guttahn*,

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\* *Kamilaroi and other Australian Languages*, 1875.

† *Journ. Proc. Roy. Soc. N. S. Wales*, 1900, pp. 103 *et seq.*

just as, for instance, we ourselves term the inhabitants of India Hindoos, or of New Guinea, Papuans, &c.

2. *Dáng-getti* or *Táng-getti*.—From Kempsey to the Upper Macleay River. My Ngarrabul informant includes the whole of this area within the limits of one language, but that many tribes were situated in this locality we know from the writings of Hodgkinson,\* Henderson,† and others.

3. *Himbérrong*.—East of the New England Range, at Walcha, Ingleba, &c.

4. *Inũwon* or *Nee-ĩnuwon*.—West of the Range from Bundarra to Uralla.

5. *Boorkũtti*.—From Armidale eastwards to and including the Nambucca and Bellingen Rivers, embracing Hillgrove and Wollomombi.

6. *Koombaĩnga*.—The Nymboi River, Newton Boyd, and south-westerly almost to Wollomombi.

7. *Báhnbi* or *Ahnbi*.—A circumscribed area embracing Ben Lomond, Glencoe, Marowan, Mt. Mitchell and Kookabookra.

8. *Enni-won* or *Yénni-won*.—West of the Range, at Cope's Creek, Tingha, Wandsworth, Ollera, Boorolong Creek, Black Mountain and Guyra. The Oban aboriginal placed Oban and Ward's Mistake in *En-neé-win* (evidently the same as *Enni-won*). A Ngarrabul Black included Oban in the *Ahnbi* district. The authority of the Oban native himself should have the greater weight. Possibly a frontier locality such as this would be a subject of tribal conflict and warfare, and its possession vary from time to time in accordance with the prowess of adjoining tribes. R. H. Matthews,‡ describing a New England Bora, says that, over the New England District from Moonbi to Ben Lomond, and east perhaps to Walcha, Hillgrove and Oban, westerly almost to Bundarra and Inverell, the Bora differed somewhat in different localities, and that the latter (western)

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\* Australia from Port Macquarie to Moreton Bay, 1845.

† Excursions and Adventures in New South Wales, 1851.

‡ Proc. Roy. Soc. Vic. N.S. ix., 1896.

area adjoined on the Kamilaroi all the way. This we shall see is inaccurate as regards the tribal boundaries. He speaks of the languages *Nowan* and *Yunggai* as obtaining over this area. *Nowan* may be both my *Inuwon* and *Enneewin*, which would account for a good deal of the area mentioned, including Oban to Bundarra, and a considerable extent of the New England Range. Ben Lomond, however, is just outside the Enneewin boundary. Walcha and Hillgrove also are in Himberrong and Boorkutti. Moonbi and Bendemeer I have no observations upon; possibly they are in the Yunggai of that writer—a name somewhat suggestive of Danggetti. His names for Dingo and Bora (*Goomat* and *Barbung*) are different from those in my Oban vocabulary.

9. *Yookúmbul*.—From Boggy Camp and Inverell, almost to Bingara on the west, Bundarra on the south, and Tingha on the south-east.

10. *Ngárrabul*.—From Stonehenge north to Bolivia, including Beardy River and Beardy Plains, Matheson, Waterloo, Ilparran, Glen Innes, Clairvaux, Wellingrove, Wellingrove Creek, Glendon, Yarraford, Furrucabad, Beaufort, Dundee, Ranger's Valley, Emmaville (Vegetable Creek), Deepwater, and Wellington Vale.

11. *Bündel* or *Bündëla*.—Yugilbah and Gordon Creek.

12. *Gee-én-yun*.—About Tabulam.

13. *Márbül*.—About Tenterfield.

14. *Kweémbul*.—Ashford, Fraser's Creek, Severn and Sovereign Rivers, and possibly at times Inverell, as one of my informants included this last-named place within the territory of this tribe, although others placed it in Yookumbul. Being close to the border-line, it may have been the subject of intertribal feuds.

15. *Bee-gümbul*.—Bonshaw; Yetman and Bogabilla (on the MacIntyre River); Callandoon and the Weir River—in part (in Queensland). Ridley includes within his *Pikumbul* region the MacIntyre River, Callandoon and the Weir River. Matthews gives Goondiwindi (MacIntyre R.) and Welltown (Weir R., Queensland) as belonging to the *Pickumbil* Tribe.

16. *Kao-ámbul*.—Inglewood (Queensland), and extending towards the Dumaresque and Mooni Rivers. Ridley gives Kingki and Paiamba as the languages of the adjacent Darling Downs.

17. *Wigal-wollümbul*.—Mooni River (Queensland).

18. *Wee-n'gül-la-m'bül*.—Queensland, beyond the Weir River.

19. *Gínniebal* or *Gínnieval*.—Wallangra and Blue Nobby.

20. *Wólroi*.—Terry-hie-hie, Paramallowa, Molroy, Warialda, and on the south almost to Bingara. Ridley\* gives Wolaroi (with the half vowel *a*, which my informants did not sound) as obtaining on the Bundarra or Gwydir River. Part of the Gwydir is certainly within their area, but the name Bundarra River is usually reserved for the upper affluent stream—in the Inuwon territory.

21. *Giróombul*.—Mt. Lowry, Manilla, Barraba, and on the Gwydir River at Bingara.

22. *Kóomilroi*.—This I was told was a tribe quite distinct from Kamilroi, and had its own expression of negation—*koómil*. This language was spoken at Breeza, on the Namoi (Narrabri, Bogabri, Gunnedah), on the Gwydir (Moree, and extending almost to Bingara). In a southerly direction the tribe adjoined upon Kamilroi, while north-westerly it crossed the Queensland border and reached as far as St. George.

23. *Kámilroi*.—I always heard this name pronounced as written, without the half vowel *a* between the second and third syllables (*Kámlarói*). Other writers have spelt the word thus—*Gummilroi* and *Comleroy*. Breton† describes an aboriginal fight which took place at Wollombi, near the Lower Hunter, and in which the Comleroy blacks engaged. The precise area occupied by the Kamilroi tribe appears to be involved somewhat in obscurity, different writers expressing widely divergent opinions. The limits ascribed generally seem to be extraordinarily wide in

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\* *Loc. cit.* p. 119.

† Excursions in New South Wales, Western Australia, and Van Dieman's Land, 1833.

comparison with the territory of other tribes. In this, as in other cases, faulty information supplied by the blacks owing to the lack of accurate knowledge, may in some measure explain the discrepancies. Probably, however, the boundaries of a tribe were not fixed and permanent, but varied from time to time by right of conquest, or altered owing to the intermingling of adjoining tribes. My informants limited the Kamilroi region to the Upper Hunter (Muswellbrook), Quirindi, Peel River (Tamworth), and reaching on the north almost to Manilla. They sharply discriminated between this tribe (negative *Kamil*) and the Koomilroi tribe above defined.

Sir Thomas Mitchell\* gives a vocabulary obtained on the Karaula (MacIntyre) River at 29° S. lat. (*i.e.*, about the site of the present Mungindi). Now this resembles Ridley's Pikumbul tongue, but more so the Kamilaroi. However, it is palpably different from both. "Yes" and "no" in this vocabulary are like those of the Wiradhuri dialect of Wellington and the Lower Castlereagh. There are also other slight affinities to this language, but at the same time conspicuous differences. Mitchell himself remarks that it was nearly but not altogether the same as the Wallamoul (Tamworth) language. Now this is what we should expect from my observations, for Mungindi is in Koomilroi and Tamworth in Kamilroi.

Ridley, in a published lecture delivered in Sydney in 1864,† thus gives the limits of the Kamilaroi tribe:—"All down the Namoi, along the Barwon from the Mooni to the junction of the Namoi, on the Bundarra [*sc.* Gwydir], northward, and the Liverpool Plains and the Upper Hunter southward." This includes both Kamilroi and Koomilroi. He further observes that the Kamilaroi language "is understood on the Balonne," which is the farthest extent of my Koomilroi. The same writer‡ includes the Balonne within the Kamilaroi area, although elsewhere§ he

\* Australian Expeditions, Vol. ii., App. 1839.

† The Aborigines of Australia, p. 15.

‡ Kamilaroi and other Australian Languages, p. 1, 1875.

§ *Loc. cit.* p. 119.

gives the Yularai language as obtaining on the Balonne, and further states that the Wolaroi tongue is spoken on the Bundarra (or Gwydir) River—which latter observation agrees with my own data.

John Fraser\* gives the Kamilaroi range as the Gwydir (my Koomilroi), Mt. Gravesend and Terry-hie-hie (my Wolroi), and also the MacIntyre River (which is partly in my Koomilroi and partly in my Beegumbul). Elsewhere† he includes Yaggabi, on the Gwydir, within the Kamilaroi area. This, too, would form part of my Wolroi.

R. H. Matthews,‡ in his account of the Kamilaroi Bora, gives as the localities in which Kamilaroi is spoken, Meroe, Mogil Mogil, Gundablouie, Mungindi and Kunopia, in New South Wales; and in Queensland, Tallwood, Redbank Creek, Moogan, Warril Creek, and the lower Mooni, all of which accord well with my Koomilroi. Further, the native words used in Matthews' account are altogether different from Ridley's Kamilaroi language. Again, Matthews, in his description of the New England Bora, gives the Kamilaroi range as extending over the Namoi, Gwydir, Barwon and west of the latter (Koomilroi again), but also the MacIntyre and Severn Rivers, which is opposed to Ridley's authority as well as his own in another article. Matthews includes St. George in the *Kogai* tongue, but Ridley places Kogai west of the Balonne.

24. *Wailwun*.—At Wee Waa on the Namoi. According to Ridley, this language is spoken on the Barwon for about 40 miles below the junction of the Namoi. Being so remote from the haunts of my Ngarrabul informant, I cannot lay stress on this discrepancy. Doubtless Ridley's information is the more accurate.

Ngarrabul mythology ascribes unity to all the blacks until a great flood overwhelmed the land. After that the survivors

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\* Stories about the Kamilaroi Tribe, 1882.

† Journ. Proc. Roy. Soc. N.S. Wales, 1882, p. 203.

‡ Proc. Roy. Soc. Vic. N.S. ix., 1896.

separated and went different ways, and so founded different tribes and acquired separate languages. The tribes then became distributed in groups. As a rule three tribes—no more—thoroughly understood each other's tongue. Outside these groups of three, although different tribes could make themselves comprehended, they were not completely conversant with one another's language. Appended are some of these groups, set down just as I was informed, but I fear containing many inconsistencies.

1. Koombainga, Boorkutti and Danggetti thoroughly understood each other.

2. Himberrong understood Inuwon but not Enniwon as well.

3. Inuwon, Enniwon and Yookumbul thoroughly understood each other. Further, Enneewin presented marked affinities to Ngarrabul.

4. Marbul, Ngarrabul and Yookumbul understood each other.

5. Kweembul, Ngarrabul and Marbul understood each other.

6. Ngarrabul, Kweembul and Yookumbul. Kamilroi was but little understood by Ngarrabul.

7. Kweembul, Ginniebal and Wolroi. Beegumbul was not intimately known by this group, but possessed many affinities to it.

8. Wolroi, Ginniebal and Koomilroi.

9. Kaoambul, Beegumbul and Wigalwollumbul.

10. Koombainga and Bundela were closely related.

In the early days aborigines were very numerous in Central and Northern New England. Present residents can well remember the times when Oban, Deepwater, Guyra, Wellingrove, &c., were the scenes of large concourses of the dusky inhabitants. The remnants of the tribes are now comparatively few and degenerate, yet in some ways clinging tenaciously to their old tribal customs. At Wellingrove, when I left the district in 1901, was located an old native named Peter Perry. Perry was born at Yugilbah. As a lad he was taken away by the whites, but again returned to his old habits and joined the Ngarrabul tribe. After the extinction of the tribes he moved to Inverell, but

finally settled at Wellingrove. His household consisted of a half-caste wife and four three-quarter children, with two quarter-caste step-children. His own youngest child was then about 5 years old. One of his daughters had a baby by a white father. Perry's grandfather and grandmother, as well as his uncles, were from Nymboi. He said that in the early days the tribes were very populous, and that as a rule the New England tribes were friendly with each other, but hostile to the Queensland and Macleay River tribes, with whom they had many battles. At Inverell I used to see an old North Queensland black tracker, Bungaree. Steve O'Brien was an Inverell tribesman in the prime of life. He had been a station hand at Callandoon in Queensland. He, with other Blacks from the inland plains, paid frequent visits to Wellingrove. At Show time many natives of all ages and both sexes would wander through Glen Innes from distant parts of the State. At Oban-Kookabookra was a little band of about eighteen. At Oban is a Government reserve for the aboriginals, but this they rarely occupy, as some of their dead are there buried. Dicky Nelson, the patriarch of them all—an old man a quarter of a century ago—was a familiar figure prospecting for precious metal in the bed of the creek, and thus passing his declining days—alone.

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PLATE XXI.

Map showing Distribution of Aboriginal Tribes in Northern New South Wales and Southern Queensland.